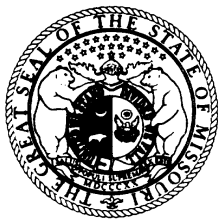


EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY



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Director James Praises Joint Response for Missouri's Storm Victims

The joint response of local, state, federal officials, and disaster volunteer organizations are helping the Missouri citizens and communities recovery from last weekend's tornados, which killed 11 people and injured 100. An expedited request for Federal Disaster Assistance was approved in record time – 4 days. On March 16, citizens in nine counties became eligible to receive federal disaster assistance, and governments in seven counties became eligible to receive federal assistance. Governor Blunt is asking that additional counties receive assistance.

"The disaster response and faith-based volunteer organizations are one of Missouri's greatest assets. Since the weekend storms, volunteers have helped clear debris from the property of elderly and disabled citizens, managed four shelters, provided hot meals for victims and relief workers, and provided assistance to individuals before the President authorized federal assistance," said Department of Public Safety Director Mark James.

Since receiving the disaster declaration, Missourians who suffered any storm related damages are urged to the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Assistance hotline: **1-800-621-3362 (1-800-621-FEMA) or 1-800-462-7585 (TTY)** between the hours of 8 a.m. – 6 p.m., seven days a week. This call is the first step for individuals or businesses to receive federal disaster assistance.

"The initial response and the damage assessment information provided by local communities and counties has been outstanding," said State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) Director Ron Reynolds. "Having said that, I must applaud the rapid actions of state agencies and FEMA to help Missourians trying to rebuild their lives after the devastating tornadoes," he added. SEMA and FEMA will open both mobile and fixed Disaster Recovery Centers in many communities beginning this week.

State agencies have helped local communities with security, law enforcement, debris removal, and shelter operations, public and mental health issues. Since Wednesday, the SEMA/FEMA/Local government joint damage assessment teams collected damage information in 43 counties. These damage assessments will be used to identify additional counties for inclusion in the disaster declaration.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) County Farm Services Offices are helping rural farmers/producers with emergency programs to replace buildings, fencing or production expenses.

Volunteer Organizations such as the Red Cross, Salvation Army, AmeriCorps, and faith-based disaster response organizations continue to run the following disaster assistance programs for Missourians:

* **Debris Removal for Special Needs (Elderly, disabled etc) Citizens:** AmeriCorps have teams in Perry, Ste. Genevieve, and Hickory. The Southern Baptists have response teams in Randolph, Ste. Genevieve, New Madrid, Christian and Webster Counties. The Mennonite Disaster Services has teams in Monroe, Madison, Pettis, and Randolph counties.

* **Multi-Agency Resource Centers:** staffed by American Red Cross and local volunteer organizations are located in: Cedar, Christian, Lawrence, Monroe, Morgan (2), Perry, Pettis, Randolph and Saline Counties. The Red Cross is operating 14 field outreach teams in Bates, Cedar, Dunklin, Jefferson, Lincoln, Madison, Mississippi, Monroe, Montgomery, New Madrid, Newton, Randolph, St Clair and Scott Counties.

* **Crisis Response Teams of the National Organization for Victim Assistance (MO-NOVA-CRT)** are working in Christian, Hickory, Lawrence, and Webster Counties. These teams provide psychological first aid and crisis intervention services.

* **Mass Feeding Operations:** Over 14,000 meals have been served. Stationary Mass feeding operations are located in Cedar, Lawrence, Monroe (2), Perry and Webster Counties. Mobile Mass Feeding Operations are being conducted in Christian (3), Greene, Lawrence, Monroe, Morgan, Perry, Pettis, Randolph and Webster Counties.

* **Shelters:** the shelters in Christian, Lawrence, Monroe and Pettis Counties are now closed.

* **Bulk Distribution Centers:** are located in Cedar (2), Christian (3), Green, Hickory, Lawrence and Pettis Counties.

* Managing the Missouri Tornado Disaster Assistance Donations call center. As of March 17, the center has received 223 calls from citizens including 129 for assistance, 53 offering donations, and 32 individuals wanting to volunteer.